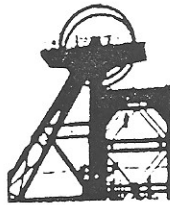


National Association of Mining History Organisation



NEWSLETTER

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The last NAMHO Newsletter was produced by Adrian Pearce way back in March 1991. I accepted the position of NAMHO Newsletter editor at the Council Meeting that took place during the Conference at LLechwedd last May. The delay in producing this edition of the Newsletter is due to a single fact. I have not had anything to go into the Newsletter other than a couple of items from Roger Burt. The copy that I have received for this edition has been obtained through the efforts of Mike Gill. Mike has provided a considerable amount of copy himself and he has twisted the arm of other persons to send me articles etc for inclusion in the Newsletter.

The NAMHO Council believe that the Newsletter is an asset to the Organisation but it can only be published on a regular basis if members provide the editor with articles and other snippets for publication. Would members please send me any articles etc which they believe are suitable for consideration for publication. A worthwhile source of information may well be your own Newsletters - please send me a copy so that you may get an even wider circulation for your publication.

It is hoped that the Newsletter can be published three times a year and be circulated with the minutes of the Council Meetings. In order to satisfy this timetable all copy etc should be sent to me at least four weeks before the relevant Council meeting.

Wes Taylor

MINING HISTORY HANDBOOK

The first edition of the Mining History Handbook is still available for purchase. This publication contains a wealth of information for the mining historian. Besides listing all of the members of NAMHO and giving details of the Societies, their main activities, facilities, locations etc, the publication gives advice and guidance to individuals who wish to develop their interest in mining history.

The book also contains extensive address lists of organisations outside of NAMHO which may be a source of information to mining historians.

The retail cost of the book is £3.50 per copy (including postage). For orders of 3 or more copies there is a discounted price of £2.00 per copy.

Copies of the handbook are available from Adrian Pearce, 72 Hopkins Heath, Shawbirch, Telford, Shropshire, TF5 0LZ. Tel: Telford (0952) 253310.

NAMHO BI-ANNUAL FIELD MEET - SHROPSHIRE 1992

Do you want to:-

- Explore old mines?
- Learn about underground surveying?
- Attend seminars on preserving mining sites?
- Learn how to take underground video recordings?
- Have a conducted surface tour of mines?
- Learn single rope techniques?
- Buy books and/or equipment

Whatever your interest, you will be catered for.

When	June 27th-28th 1992
What	The bi-annual field meet of the National Association of Mining History Organisations
Who	Anyone
Cost	£5.00 per person for the weekend
Hosts	Shropshire Caving & Mining Club

Full details of the weekend can be obtained by sending an SAE to Adrian Pearce, 72 Hopkins Heath, Shawbirch, Telford, Shropshire, TF5 0LZ. Tel: Telford (0952) 253310.

NEW SYSTEM FOR THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY RECORDS

During the last ten years the Society's Records have grown to a size such that a new filing system is being introduced.

Under the old system files were devoted to mining areas and specific sites were recorded in a paper index. This method was adequate whilst the range of material was small but, now that the coverage has become more comprehensive, the Recorder is revising the way in which the material is kept.

The main files are being re-organised and the material is being split into its pre-1974 County and then sub-divided into its Civil Parish. The counties, parishes and documents will each have a unique number to make indexing and searching easier.

Material relating to the Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire Moors has already been entered into the new system and work is progressing with other areas.

Mike Gill

BACKBARROW IRON FURNACE

The Lancaster University Archaeological Unit has been appointed to make a full photographic record of the Backbarrow Furnace in Cumbria. (MG)

FORCE CRAG MINE

Force Crag Mine in the Lake District has now closed and the Lake District Mines and Quarries Trust has bought the crushing and fines processing plant (excluding the flotation cells) for its museum. (MG)

MARRICK HIGH AND LOW SMELT MILLS

Due to the deteriorating condition of these important monuments and a problem with the owner of the site regarding access, English Heritage has, for the first time, used the provisions in Section 5 of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. This Act gives English Heritage the power to enter land and do emergency repairs to a monument which is under serious threat.

The work being done under the Act includes consolidation of the chimney of the Top Mill and a gable wall on the Bottom Mill. The cost of these emergency repairs is £80,000. (MG)

BRITISH COAL RECORDS

The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts is talking to British Coal with a view to establishing a procedure for saving the British Coal archives. There are grounds for disquiet, however, as British Coal have given the matter a very low priority in its accelerated closure programme. The loss of monuments caused by the rapid clearance of abandoned colliery sites is also giving cause for concern. (MG)

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

English Heritage recently announced that it will be consulting interested parties about proposals for a Register of Historic Landscapes. Through its chairman, NAMHO has been urging this as an option for protecting mining landscapes like the Upper Nent Valley, Grassington Moor and the Hungry Hushes in Arkengarthdale. (MG)

TRAINING SCHEMES

It has been established that funds are available from NCA to contribute to the cost of providing training in techniques used in mine and/or cave exploration. Please contact Adrian Pearce for advice as to how the funds may be obtained.

A NOTE AND QUERY FROM LEADHILLS - GRIPPS LEVEL

Gripps Level, the drainage level for the mines at Leadhills, Lanarkshire, Scotland, is at this moment of time choked at a point about 570 metres from the portal. The water has backed up to produce a head of 34 metres.

The tail of the level has a number of shafts along its length and the blockage is at the penultimate shaft. Water is issuing through the (backfilled) spoil at the shaft head and at the one beyond, (Grid Ref NS88501705). A strong flow of water is also issuing through the spoil filling of the portal of a horse level that is located a short distance away (Grid Ref NS 88551640). Taking levels from the 6" OS Map, the difference in height between the Horse Level and Gripps is about 34 metres. There is still water at Gripps Portal but the flow is very much reduced. The normal flow is said to be 25 million litres per day.

Gripps drains all of the Leadhills Mines via an estimated 8 kilometres of levels. The level was started in 1768 by the Earl of Hopetown to drain the Susanna and adjacent mines. It was taken over in 1772 by one of the Earl's leasees, the Scots Mines Company. Susanna was reached in 1790 and by 1859, when operations were greatly reduced, Gripps had been extended into Brown's vein but at this time it had not overtaken the older Poutshiel Level. Poutshiel Level

was driven in the 1860's as part of a programme to use this level as a tramway out to an adjacent dressing floor. It seems probable that the water now flowing from it is rising via the Borlaise (Wembley) shaft and/or old shafts in the Mill and Glasgow veins. Short of digging out the portal there is no way of examining the situation below ground.

The landowner, Hopetown Estates, is aware of the situation. Messrs Johnson, Poole and Bloomer, who were involved in grouting old workings under the village in 1989, and more recently capping shafts, are also aware of the situation. The Clyde River Purification Board is also monitoring the situation and the author of this article is liaising with their Inspector on this problem.

Do any NAMHO members know of similar situations elsewhere in the country? If there are, or were, any similar situations, what happened? The topography at Leadhills makes it unlikely that there could be a "blow out" such as occurred at the Magpie Sough in Derbyshire but there must be potential for other problems.

Any comments would be gratefully received. Bill Harvey, 86 Beechwood Drive, Broomhill, Glasgow, G1 7HG.

PROGRESS AT CONNONLEY LEAD MINE

The Connonley Project has gone well this summer and many of the major pieces of work that were necessary for site safety have been completed by the Friends of Connonley mine.

The work has included a reinforced concrete retaining wall that was built into the tip alongside the bob-pit at the Engine Shaft. This wall will relieve pit and shaft top of any pressure from the dump. The dump has been replaced and landscaped to hide the wall.

The area around the top of the Engine Shaft and over the stone arched bob-pit was also dug out and backfilled with concrete to consolidate the area. As the new collar was kept close to the shaft, no trace of the poppet-headframe (used for lifting pitwork) was found. It is intended to replace the concrete sleeper cap on the shaft with a grille. The material which had collapsed into the bob-pit has also been removed. Sadly, however, the only traces of the pitwork were two holding-down bolts near to the shaft edge.

The large thorn bush growing from the top of Taylor's Shaft was removed and the ground was dug out to the clay sub-soil. The shaft, which is in good condition but flooded at about 30 metres, is stone lined and has an oval profile, about 1.8 by 1.3 metres. A raft of concrete sleepers was laid across the shaft and capped with concrete. A vent pipe was incorporated in the cap.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers spent a second week on site during the summer when they rebuilt a section of drystone arched culvert which carried the beck under the dumps. Sadly, however, due to a lack of stone, much of which has been denatured by the acid in the spoil, and the major damage that was done by a dragline used to reclaim barytes in the 1950's, it will not be possible to rebuild all of the culvert. It is proposed to pipe the middle section of the culvert and arch both ends.

The overflow to the mine reservoir was breached and this has now been repaired and a spillway has been built to prevent erosion. It is proposed to reopen the original outlet which has collapsed and is silted up. This will provide a means of draining the reservoir if required. In the meantime the summer has ended with the reservoir full of water and it is no longer in danger of drying up, a fact appreciated by the sundry birds, frogs, newts and fish which live in, or

on, the water and the cattle which drink from it.

The portal of the Inclined Shaft had been filled with old cars and "chicken exhaust". This has been cleaned out but it needs a handrail around the area and the stonework requires some repair work to make it sound. A start has been made to repair the pointing to the Magazine and Smithy buildings.

The site roads have been scraped clean and dressed with (limestone) quarry waste. This is not in keeping with the mine's geology (grit, shale and mudstone) but it makes better roads and is easily recognised as foreign material. Moreover, it matches the whiteness of the dumps whereas crushed sandstone would not be compatible.

Work will continue through the winter and next year it is intended to erect notice boards to guide visitors around the site. Anyone is welcome to visit the site but PLEASE leave cars on the road and walk up the private track.

There is still plenty of work to be done on the site and offers of help will be most welcome. Please contact Mike Gill. Tel: (0535) 635388.

SOURCES OF COPPER FOR THE BRITISH BRONZE AGE

A project has been set up to determine the origin of the ores that were used in the manufacture of copper artifacts during the British Bronze Age. The work will be carried out at the Isotracer Laboratory, Department of Nuclear Physics at Oxford University.

Lead Isotope and Trace Element analysis will be used to characterise the artifacts and ore samples. It is hoped that by using this technique it will be possible to match the artifacts to regional ore sources, thus providing a wealth of information on the trading routes in Bronze Age Britain.

To enable this work to proceed it is necessary for samples of lead and copper ores to be made available for analysis. The samples of ore required for analysis must not be weathered or oxidised and detailed information relating to the source of the ore is also required.

Offers of assistance with this project, and requests for further information should be addressed to Brenda Rohl, Isotracer Laboratory, Nuclear Physics, Oxford University, Keble Rd, Oxford, OX1 3RH. Tel: Oxford (0865) 237489.

HAIG COLLIERY - WHITEHAVEN

A report has been produced by Task Management Services for Cumbria County Council outlining the history of Haig Colliery and stating why this colliery should be preserved. It is hoped that the project to preserve the site will attract EEC Development funding.

British Coal have gone quiet about allowing the Trust to take over the engine buildings. There is, however, a worry that the buildings will be vandalised. (CATMHS)

COVENTRY COLLIERY, KERESLEY, WARWICKSHIRE

In 1901 the Warwickshire Coal Company was registered and its shares were floated. The declared aim of the Company was to develop a colliery on a large area of virgin coal seams at Keresley, north of the City of Coventry.

Very little appears to have been done on the ground but a large number of the shares were purchased in 1902 by the Coltness Iron Company of Scotland. Again there was little activity on the ground but there were negotiations with local landowners aimed at obtaining a lease on a larger area of coal seams. The old Company liquidated in favour of the new Warwickshire Coal Company which paid £270,000 in fully paid up shares for the assets. The Warwickshire Coal Company was registered on 14th February 1911 and held an estate of 975 acres freehold and 2,999 acres leasehold. The capital was £450,000. All of the shares were held by the Coltness Iron Company, whose Directors formed the Board.

Sinking began in March 1912 and was completed at a depth of 730 yards in September 1917. The pit bottom was in the Warwickshire Thick Coal which was 28 feet thick. This seam was made up of a number of seams of coal that had come together in this area. The main seams are, from the bottom up, the Nine Foot, Ell, Ryder, Bare and Two Yard. The seam dipped westwards at 1 in 16.

It was planned to produce 20,000 tons of coal per week but the mine was developed slowly and it was not until 1939 that 1,011,566 tons were produced in the year. It is stated that the colliery was profitable from 1924.

Just prior to the Second World War a drilling programme to the west of the colliery located a further 6,000 acres of workable coal and a new colliery was proposed. The intervention of the War stopped the plans from being developed and this coal was eventually worked from the existing shafts.

In the early years of working the method of extraction was by the Board and Pillar system but the level of output was disappointing. Experiments with the Longwall system were more promising and this developed into a retreat system with three separate faces, each 6 feet high, taking slices out of the seam. The bottom slice, the Nine Foot, was taken first, followed about 15 yards behind by the Ryder slice. The Two Yard slice followed a further 15 yards behind the Ryder. Whilst working under the city of Coventry a modified form of Board and Pillar system was used to minimise surface subsidence.

In order to improve output a battery electric locomotive haulage system and a new coal preparation plant were installed in the 1960's. A "Homefire" smokeless fuel plant was constructed on the site in 1967 and this huge steel structure has dominated the area ever since.

Originally steam winders were used at the colliery. One by Markham's of Chesterfield, the other by Robey's of Lincoln. Electricity for use at the colliery was produced by turbo alternators that were driven by waste steam. These winders were replaced by electric winders in 1970.

The electric winder that was installed to serve the Downcast Shaft had originally been used at Moseley Common Colliery in Lancashire. When this machine had originally been installed it had been described as the "largest winder in Europe".

When the electric winders were installed the coal handling system in the shafts was changed by replacing the mine cars with 12 tonne capacity skips. A further first at this time was the introduction of "Elram" electro-hydraulic skip handling equipment.

With the completion of these modifications the colliery was producing 522,000 tonne of coal annually with a workforce of 1,114 men.

The period of time to 1990 saw the elimination of the "three tier" system of work and the extended use of high technology shearer/powered support working a leaf, 2 to 4 metre thick, from the top of the Warwickshire Thick Coal, in the

conventional longwall method. A £16 million coal preparation plant, which incorporated rapid loading facilities, was also built. At this stage the colliery was producing 1.2 million tonnes per year with a workforce of 1,350 men.

Over recent years losses, said to run to £6 million per year, have influenced the decision to impose very high output targets on the colliery. It has been said that these targets were impossible to achieve and that the intention was to lead to the closure of the colliery. The colliery ceased production on 16th October 1991.

British Coal have stated that the site will be cleared within two years. There is now only one working colliery left on the Warwickshire Coalfield. This is at Daw Mill, near Arley and is working the upper leaf of the Warwickshire Thick Coal.

Nigel Chapman

HOW MANY ACTIVE MINES ARE THERE IN THE UK?

The official answer to the above question for underground mining, as recognised by the British Geological Survey, is 263. There are 226 coal mines, 5 for metaliferrous ores, the remaining 32 mines are for miscellaneous mineral products. There are 70 coal mines listed as being worked by British Coal, but this number has been reduced since this research has been carried out. The remaining coal mines are operated privately.

The mines working metaliferrous and miscellaneous products as listed in P M Harris, D E Highley, and K R Bentley's (1991) Directory of Mines and Quarries, 1991, Third Edition (British geological Survey) are:-

<u>Mineral</u>	<u>Mine</u>	<u>NGR</u>	<u>Location</u>
Anhydrite	Newbiggin	NY630270	Appelby, Cumbria
Ball clay	No 11	SX850763	Newton Abbot, Devon
	Nos 5 & 6	SX855758	" "
	No 4	SX859751	" "
	Broadway	SX860737	" "
	Aldermoor	SY916827	Wareham, Dorset
	Greenspecks	SY926827	"
Barytes	Norden No 6	SY946827	Corfe Castle, Dorset
	Force Crag (Now closed)	NY200217	Braithwaite, Cumbria
Fireclay	Shibden No 2	SE097274	Halifax, W Yorks
Fluorspar	Frazer's Grove	NY896441	Rookhope, Durham
	Milldam	SK177781	Great Hucklow, Derbyshire
	Sallet Hole	SK220742	Eyam, Derbyshire
Gypsum	Longriggs	NY654257	Appelby, Cumbria
	Birkshead	NY668258	"
	Barrow	SK570180	Barrow on Soar, Notts
	Marblaegis	SK554282	East Leake, Notts
	Fauld	SK181283	Tutbury, Staffs
	Brightling	TQ677219	Robertsbridge, E Sussex
Honestone	Sundrum	NS432232	Stair, Strathclyde Region
	Quilkiestone	NS433230	"
Iron ore	Florence	NY015095	Egremont, Cumbria
Limestone	Middleton	SK277556	Wirksworth, Derbyshire
	Hayes Wood	ST778608	Bath, Avon
	Westwood	ST808597	Bradford on Avon, Wilts

Potash	Monks Park	ST881683	Corsham, Wilts
Salt	Boulby	NZ762183	Loftus, Cleveland
	Meadowbank	SJ652680	Winsford, Cheshire
	Kilroot	J 450890	Carrickfergus, Antrim
Silica sand	Lochaline	NM680450	Lochaline, Highland Region
Slate	Manod	SH731454	Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd
	Aberllefenni	SH768104	Machhynlleth, Gwynedd
Tin	Geevor	SW374345	Pendeen, Cornwall
	South Crofty	SW665412	Pool, Redruth, Cornwall
	Wheal Jane (Now closed)	SW771425	Chacewater, Cornwall
Zinc	Parys	SH437897	Amlwch, Anglesey

Paul W Sowan

THE 3rd INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON UNDERGROUND QUARRIES - NAPLES, JULY 1991

Underground archaeology, whether of underground stone quarries or of a wider variety of subterranean structures, is currently attracting considerable attention throughout Europe with active societies in many countries publishing well-produced journals. During the last ten years or so the members of these societies have been increasing the contact with each other through visits, international conferences and by correspondence.

The Naples conference was held at a stunning location, the Castel dell 'Ovo, a fortified rock jutting out into the Bay of Naples. It was hosted by the Neapolitan Section of the Italian Alpine Club. Overseas representatives were from the UK (the writer of this report), the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, France and the USA. The papers presented dealt with extensive underground aqueducts, quarries, and tunnels of Naples and the surrounding areas; and a variety of quarry and non-quarry structures in Czechoslovakia, France, West Bohemia, Bulgaria and South East England.

Subterranea Britannica last held an International Conference in 1978. The conference was based in Cambridge with visits to Nottingham and the Chatham fortifications. This conference attracted massive support from its French sister organisation, Societe Francaise d'Etudes des Souterrains.

The next UK International Symposium is to be organised by Subterranea Britannica and will be based at Newton Park, Bath. It will held on 7th - 11th August 1992. Full details and booking forms are available from Mrs S P Beamon, Subterranea Britannica, 2 Morton St, Royston, Herts, SG8 7AZ. (PWS)

THE MINES OF IBERIA

Two tours have been provisionally arranged by Atalaya Tours Ltd for 1992. One will be visiting Rio Tinto and the other will be to the Mines of Andalucia.

Further details are available from Atalaya Tours Ltd, Ceinionfa, Penglais Terrace, Aberystwyth, SY23 2ET.

WHEAL JANE

Carnon Consolidated have submitted proposals to turn the Wheal Jane Mine into a £35 million leisure, tourist and business complex. It is claimed that this is the only way that South Crofty mine can be kept open and that it allows for Wheal Jane to be re-opened in the future if the price of tin rises sufficiently.